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SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR ISN PDAS MCNERNEY, BURRUS CARNAHAN IN
ISN/NESS, ARIEL STUKALIN IN ISN/RA, AND ANDREW STEINFELD IN
NEA/ARP

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TAGS: [PARM](#) [PREL](#) [KNNP](#) [KPAL](#) [SA](#)
SUBJECT: SAUDI FM ON NUCLEAR COOPERATION, LEBANON,
PALESTINIAN-ISRAELI CONFLICT, AND IRAQ

REF: A. STATE 65500 B. BEIRUT 00883 C. RIYADH 775

Classified By: Ambassador Ford Fraker for reasons 1.4 (B) and (D)

1. (S) SUMMARY: In the Ambassador's June 23 meeting with Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Saud al-Faisal, they discussed: nuclear cooperation (reftels A and C), the Saudi pledge for the Nahr al Barid conference (reftel B), implementing the Annapolis Agreement, and debt forgiveness for Iraq. The Ambassador urged the Foreign Minister to bring into force the Saudi Safeguards Agreement, which the Foreign Minister said he would work to accomplish. The Ambassador also proposed a bilateral working-level meeting on nuclear cooperation in Washington, D.C. in August. The Foreign Minister replied that the Saudi delegation may include officials from the King Abd al-Aziz City for Science and Technology (KACST) and from the Saudi Council of Ministers legal department. The Ambassador emphasized that these steps are critical to concluding a formal nuclear cooperation agreement and the Foreign Minister agreed on the need for an "action plan." Regarding Lebanon, the Foreign Minister and Saudi Ambassador to Lebanon Dr. Abdulaziz Khoja, who joined the meeting, stated that the SAG's initial \$25 million contribution to the Nahr al Barid reconstruction conference donation should be seen as the first in a series of potential donations for rebuilding the camp. Concerning the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, the Foreign Minister said that only "people on the ground" can implement the Annapolis Agreement and shared that he recently asked British Prime Minister Gordon Brown to raise this during his upcoming visit to the U.S. On Iraq, he said the Saudi government (SAG) did not expect the Iraqi government (GOI) to repay its debt and stated that all countries needed to assist the GOI to end its "internal disputes." END SUMMARY.

NUCLEAR COOPERATION

2. (S) In the Ambassador's June 23 meeting with the Foreign Minister, he raised next steps for nuclear cooperation with the SAG (reftel A). Concerning signing the Kingdom's International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Safeguards Agreement, the Foreign Minister accepted the sample accession letter the Ambassador provided, recalled having received a previous copy, and stated that he would pass it to Foreign Ministry official Turki bin Muhammad to discuss entering it into force. He added That Turki bin Muhamad may need to meet with the Council of Ministers legal department on this issue. He said that he understood that this step is necessary to pursue a permanent nuclear cooperation agreement. The Ambassador also discussed the possibility of a bilateral

working-level meeting on nuclear cooperation in Washington, D.C. in August. The Foreign Minister stated that the Saudi delegation may include officials from KACST as well as from the Council of Foreign Ministers legal department and expected that such a gathering would produce a U.S.-Saudi "action plan."

LEBANON

¶3. (S) Concerning Saudi support to Lebanon, the Foreign Minister said that it was receiving a "multitude of support" and that the future depended on elections. The Ambassador urged him to support the June 23 Nahr al Barid reconstruction conference and the Foreign Minister stated that the SAG could only commit \$25 million at the moment. The Ambassador then suggested that a "commitment in principle" be made for a larger amount and that the \$25 million could then be seen as the first tranche in a series of fundings. The Foreign Minister as well as Saudi Ambassador to Lebanon Khoja, who later joined the meeting, agreed that that would improve the conference's outcome and they would be willing to consider this if it was agreed by the conference members. The Foreign Minister also shared his June 22 conversation with Lebanese Prime Minister Siniora in which Siniora expressed his disappointment with the conference. The Foreign Minister said he told him "Don't be so tense," and suggested he place less emphasis on the conference. Ambassador Khoja reiterated at the end of the meeting that the \$25 million should be seen as the first in a series of commitments.

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PALESTINIAN-ISRAELI CONFLICT

¶4. (S) Switching to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, the Foreign Minister said: "We hoped there would be someone on the ground in Israel who worked daily to get the process of Annapolis on the road." He added that "Having people come and go is not the same as having them on the ground." He further stated: "The Americans have to bring around the Israelis and the Arabs have to bring around the Palestinians." When the Ambassador asked him if he had expressed his concerns to the Secretary, the Prince shared a recent conversation with British Prime Minister Gordon Brown in which he urged him to focus on this issue during his upcoming visit to the United States.

IRAQ

¶5. (S) In reference to Iraq, the Ambassador highlighted the current discussions about humanitarian aid and raised the need for debt forgiveness, a topic that he had discussed previously with Saudi Minister of Finance Dr. Ibrahim al-Assaf. The Foreign Minister replied that debt forgiveness is not an issue and that no one in the SAG is expecting the GOI to payback their debt. The Ambassador said he hoped that an announcement could be made soon on this as it would send a very positive political signal. The Foreign Minister added that, "The important aspect is for all of us to be working for Iraq to finish its internal disputes." Referencing one of Iraq's senior Shia clerics, Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani, and his supporters in the Iraqi southern province of Najaf, he stated: "It can only happen if you get to the "Marjayyat"; without the "Marjayyat" you can't do anything."

TONEY